

## **Met with Congressman Harry Mitchell and Other Great Organizations to Lay the Foundation of a Solid Network in Arizona**

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#### [Veterans' of Modern Warfare](#)

At first, when I thought of how I would carve out time on a Saturday to do a Veteran's Fair in Scottsdale, I was definitely excited. However, as my week progressed, I felt weary and wasn't sure how it would all turn out. My current position at the Phoenix VA Medical Center is keeping me busy that's for sure, so I tried to get a decent night's sleep on Friday, but actually couldn't. I was sure glad I had some help from a soon-to-be Navy recruit. It definitely wasn't your typical indoctrination event for a future Sailor, however, I thought it would be a good lesson in showing how even after years away from the battlefields, our Nation's Veterans are more than just "those who have served" - we are a family! He was able to see that in many of the conversations we had throughout the day with various Veterans coming by the VMW table.

Those words were echoed by Congressman Harry Mitchell as he made his opening remarks, kicking off the event. He said that we are more than Veterans and that we are family.

The day was full of your typical Veteran Fair aspects. After presentations from VA education benefits, voc rehab specialists, VA medical benefits, mental health professionals, and VA regional office presentations on home loans and the claims process, networking continued.

Speaking with VMW Executive Director, Don Overton before the event, he echoed the importance of these "small" events. He said, "...this is how we can build Arizona. We (VMW) are getting ready to start Maryland next month...these events are the best."

They truly are very beneficial, especially for organizations that are new and growing such as VMW. Below are some of the contacts made directly from today's events:

- Office of Congressman Harry Mitchell
- Office of Congressman Ed Pastor
- OEF/OIF Transition Patient Advocate at the Phoenix VA Medical Center
- Military Enrollment Division at Grand Canyon University
- Veteran Services at Scottsdale Community College
- AZ National Guard
- AZ National Guard Personnel Readiness Center
- University of Arizona Veteran Services

As you can see, it was a very good start for VMW down in Arizona. According to the city website, the Phoenix Metropolitan area has more than 1.5million people, and the population growth has outpaced the population growth of the U.S. for the past 18yrs. Projections show that by 2030, the population of Phoenix alone will be more than 6 million. The Veteran population, just by sheer statistics is underserved in Arizona. Arizona is a frequent choice for disabled Veterans simply because of the climate and the correlation of good climate and health. VMW needs to develop a presence and stand by ready to support Arizona's Veterans.

All in all, today was the start of new beginnings for VMW in the Southwest. I believe that if we develop a solid presence here in Arizona, we will be sure to do the same in the other Southwestern states as well. If you're interested in starting a local chapter here in Arizona, please contact [exec@vmwusa.org](mailto:exec@vmwusa.org)